



A Recognized School of Excellence

# COPE MIDDLE SCHOOL

4814 Shed Road Bossier City, LA 71111 Telephone (318) 742-1730 FAX (318) 742-4183

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

William C. Allred  
Principal

Judy Grooms  
Assistant Principal

Melissa Sparkman  
Counselor

Friday, January 16, 1998

The Honorable William Kennard,  
Chairman, Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street NW  
Washington, DC 20554

CC Docket No. 97-231

Dear Chairman Kennard:

Our school benefits from two discount programs orchestrated by the Louisiana Public Service Commission. Through the Education Discount Plan, our school receives significant discounts for high-speed data circuits which helps contain Internet access costs. In addition, we receive deeply discounted long-distance service through the Local Optional Service Plan, which is available to business and residential customers within the parish.

However, as telecommunications services become more sophisticated and essential in the life of every student, we still need to have real competition in the local service market. Allowing BellSouth to compete for long-distance service will make that happen.

BellSouth believes in and supports the youth in our parish. They have contributed significant time, energy, and resources to wire out schools for Internet access and generally improve our telecommunications services through special grants and programs. Quality customer service is synonymous with BellSouth, and expanding their line of services is another way for them to meet customer needs,

Chairman Kennard, BellSouth deserves your approval of their application to enter the long distance market in Louisiana, and I hope you will move quickly to grant it to them.

Sincerely,

*William C. Allred*

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January 15, 1998

The Honorable William Kennard  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, N. W.  
Washington D.C. 20554

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CC Docket No. 97-231

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Dear Chairman Kennard:

As executive board members of the River Council of the BellSouth Volunteer Pioneers, we would like to express our opinion on BellSouth's application to become a competitive long-distance provider in Louisiana. We wholeheartedly support our company's request, as do all the Pioneer councils throughout this state. In fact, you will probably receive several copies of this letter, signed by executive board members serving on various councils.

Chairman Kennard, as employees we are well informed about the changes taking place in the telecommunications industry, particularly those associated with the implementation of the Telecommunications Act. In fact, each and every day we help our company, our customers and our competitors make the transition to a fully deregulated industry. We know first hand the steps BellSouth has taken to open its network up to its competitors and to allow them access to our operational support systems.

As Pioneers, we also have personal knowledge of our company's responsiveness and dedication to the communities we serve. Not only does BellSouth provide excellent customer service, but the company is also a good corporate citizen. Allowing BellSouth to provide long-distance service will enable us to better serve our customers and to meet their needs. Customers want the convenience of dealing with just one company for all their services, and your approval of BellSouth's application will finally give customers that option.

As employees of BellSouth and as volunteers who serve the communities in which we live and work, we urge you to approve BellSouth's request without delay and to let us take the next step in the deregulatory process.

Sincerely,

William S. George  
Edmund H. Reed  
Carl Guyan

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021

Jeff H. Ruff  
Steven C. Cook  
Patrick C. Mason  
Klara P. Hunt  
Suzie McElburne  
Diana M. Serrano



# Town of Grammercy

"THE BEST LITTLE TOWN FOR MILES AROUND."

120 North Montz Street

P. O. Drawer 340

Grammercy, Louisiana 70052

Phone 504-869-4403 • FAX 504-869-4195

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Herman P. Bourgeois  
Mayor

Date 1-19-98

The Honorable William Kennard  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, N. W.  
Washington D.C. 20554

CC Docket No. 97-231

Dear Chairman Kennard:

As the mayor of a small town in Louisiana, I encourage you to act quickly on BellSouth's application to enter the long-distance market in Louisiana and to approve it without further delay.

The citizens of Grammercy want an open telecommunications market in which prices are positively influenced by competition. They also want to be able to select one provider for all their communications services, something they cannot do today. Congress promised these benefits, but they have not materialized in Grammercy, Louisiana.

The people of this area want lower long-distance rates, and BellSouth has promised to give it to them. In fact, their per-minute long-distance rates will be five percent lower than AT&T's rates. That's real savings for my constituents.

Furthermore, our local economy will also benefit. Within ten years, this state stands to gain almost 8,000 new jobs and nearly \$1 billion in economic investment if we have full fledged telecommunications competition. As new providers enter our market, they will build their own networks, develop new services and spur economic growth, which we always welcome.

On behalf of the citizens of Grammercy, I strongly encourage you to approve BellSouth's request without delay. Grammercy and the rest of the state need the benefits that are sure to follow.

Sincerely,

*Herman P. Bourgeois*  
*Mayor*

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**IRMA  
THOMAS**



**Soul Queen of New Orleans**

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

January 16, 1998

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**CC Docket No. 97-231**

The Honorable William Kennard  
Chairman, Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Kennard:

Through friends employed by BellSouth, I have followed their journey toward the long-distance market during the past two years. I know you have worked especially hard to meet the requirements established with the passage of the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

Last summer, BellSouth was rigorously scrutinized by the Louisiana Public Service Commission in their quest to earn the endorsement of our elected state commissioners. During the hearings, BellSouth effectively convinced the commissioners that their entry into the long-distance market was in the best interest of Louisiana consumers and proved that they have opened the local market to competition. As a result, BellSouth earned the endorsement of our Louisiana commission.

As a consumer and local entertainer, I deserve the benefits that BellSouth's presence will bring to the marketplace. And, I am sure other consumers feel the same as I do. BellSouth has promised that the average customer's long-distance bill will be 5 percent lower than it is currently. In addition, consumers will finally be able to choose a single provider to handle all of their communications needs rather than dealing with several different companies. This means less confusion for us as all charges are consolidated on one monthly bill.

Chairman Kennard, I urge you to follow the rules originally established in 1996, and let BellSouth compete for long-distance service in Louisiana now.

Sincerely,

*Irma Thomas*

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FEB - 6 1998

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

January 20, 1998

The Honorable William Kennard  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, NW  
Washington D C 20554

CC Docket No. 97-231

Dear Chairman Kennard:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Greater Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, I would like to express the feelings of the local business community on BellSouth's application for approval to offer expanded long distance service in Louisiana. We strongly support the request, as we believe that this is the only way to break the current log jam that prevents meaningful telecommunications competition in most areas of our state.

As business people, we are philosophically opposed to unnecessary restraints on the free market system, and it is obvious to us now that this is what currently exists in telecommunications. We see no downside to a large, trusted, local company like BellSouth entering the long distance market. The Louisiana Public Service Commission studied the matter extensively, and it believes this is to be the case. The current system has certainly not been in the consumer's best interest. Most long distance customers have not seen lower rates, despite a decreasing cost structure in the industry resulting from access charge reductions. In fact, it appears that in our state, long distance companies have not passed on most of the access charge cost savings as was mandated by our state regulators. We also see no rush by the long distance companies to enter the local service market in any but the largest cities. With BellSouth in their markets, this would have to change.

The Lafayette area is growing, Businesses need cost-competitive, state-of-the art local and long distance telephone services. We want as many telecommunications companies as possible fighting for all of our telephone business as quickly as possible. Again, we urge you to approve BellSouth's application.

Sincerely,

James H. Prince  
Chairman of the Board

In

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**RIDGEWOOD MIDDLE SCHOOL  
2001 Ridgewood Drive  
Shreveport, Louisiana 71118  
(318) 686-0383**

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January 22, 1998

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FEB - 6 1998

The Honorable William Kennard  
Chairman, Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M. Street NW  
Washington, DC 20554

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

**CC Docket No. 97-231**

Dear Chairman Kennard:


You have an important decision to make that will have a tremendous impact on the telecommunications consumers in Louisiana. Your action will have an impact on me as an educator, and as a high volume residential consumer. BellSouth has an application before you to enter the long-distance market in Louisiana. They deserve your immediate consideration and approval of the application.

There are a number of good reasons why BellSouth should be able to compete in the long-distance now:

- \* The Louisiana Public Service Commission (LPSC) confirmed that BellSouth had met all the federal requirements.
- \* It is in the public's best interest according to the LPSC.
- \* Competition will bring lower costs.
- \* BellSouth's entry into long-distance will force the long-distance companies into the local service business to maintain market share.
- \* Customers can do business with one company again.

Your prompt positive decision will allow the telephone customers in Louisiana to be among the first to benefit from true competition.

Yours truly,

  
Jimmy R. Lynn, Principal

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JOSEPH P. BILELLO, PRESIDENT

DR. MALCOLM M. DUPLANTIS, SUPERINTENDENT



**Lafourche Parish School Board**

P. O. BOX 879  
THIBODAUX, LOUISIANA 70302-0879  
TELEPHONE: (504) 446-5631  
FAX: (504) 446-0801

January 21, 1998

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

JAN 28 10 11 AM '98

The Honorable William Kennard, Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M. Street, N. W.  
Washington, D. C. 20554

| CC Docket No. 97-231 |

Dear Chairman Kennard:

I am the current Superintendent of Lafourche Parish Schools, and in my position, I am aware of the critical role a state-of-the-art communications system plays in educating our young people. This is especially true for smaller schools located outside major metropolitan areas. If we are to be successful as educators, we must have affordable, reliable access to the Internet and other advanced telecommunications services.

As you review BellSouth's request to enter the long-distance market in Louisiana, I would like to add my endorsement of their application. It is my strong belief that their entry in the long-distance business will greatly benefit the students and educators of this state.

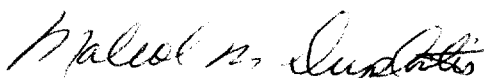
Basic economic principles suggest that competition in any market will lead to increased efficiency as companies look for ways to reduce their prices. Competition will also usually spark ingenuity and the creation of new services as businesses try to meet their customer's changing needs and keep ahead of the competition. These benefits will serve education well.

On a purely personal note, I would like to see BellSouth have an opportunity to enter a new market because BellSouth has been extremely supportive of education in this state. For example, the BellSouth Foundation has funded many special projects and the company has rewarded the creativity of hundreds of teachers through their mini-grant program. Many of the schools in this school system are also receiving highly discounted access to high-speed network services through BellSouth's Education Discount Plan.

Allowing BellSouth to compete in the long-distance business will benefit education in this parish in several ways, including price reductions and the availability of more advanced products and services.

As an educator, I strongly urge you to approve BellSouth's request before the end of the year and enable competition in the telecommunications market to benefit the young people of Lafourche Parish.

Sincerely yours,

  
Malcolm M. Duplantis, Ph. D.  
Superintendent of Schools

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MMD:gar

**Southern Hills Elementary School**  
**9705 Kingston Road**  
**Shreveport, LA 71118**  
**318-686-1974**

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FEB - 6 1998

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

JAN 28 10 08 AM '98

The Honorable William Kennard  
Chairman, Federal Communications Commission  
1919M Street NW  
Washington, DC 20544

CC Docket No. 97-231

Dear Chairman Kennard:

In the six years I have been the principal of Southern Hills Elementary School, I have been amazed and so very grateful for the support our school has received from the BellSouth corporation. BellSouth has adopted our school and has proven in numerous ways and occasions to be a truly wonderful partner in education. The funds and personal services provided to our school have enhanced the educational progress of more than a thousand children. I am aware also of many other programs which nurture the economic development process in our community.

I have followed with interest the effort BellSouth has made to be ready to enter the long-distance market. I have always found this cooperation to be one that does have the best interests of the community in mind. I sincerely believe BellSouth should be given the opportunity to enter the long-distance market immediately. Logic dictates that when BellSouth begins competing in the long-distance market, the large national companies will be forced to enter local service to maintain their customer base.

It has long been established that increased competition results in lower prices, more choices of products and services, and more jobs. As a consumer personally and professionally I would appreciate the avenues which would be opened by allowing BellSouth in to this market.

Since BellSouth has met all the requirements to enter the long-distance business, I ask that you give your immediate approval to their application so we can begin benefiting from the rewards provided by true competition.

Sincerely,

*Linda H. Cox*

Linda H. Cox  
Principal

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**Small  
Business  
SURVIVAL  
Committee**

The Honorable William Kennard  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M St., NW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

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December 22, 1997

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

CC Docket No. 97-231

Dec 29 11 15 AM '97

Dear Chairman Kennard:

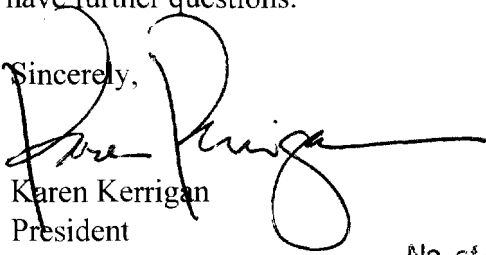
On behalf of the Small Business Survival Committee (SBSC) and our more than 40,000 members across the nation, ~~I urge the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) not to institute a dramatic change in FCC policy that, in effect, would doom local telephone competition, and continue to sentence small businesses and families to costly, unresponsive monopoly local telephone service.~~

According to the Telecommunications Act of 1996, in order to gain access to the long distance market, local telephone companies must first open up their local markets to competition. Among the criteria set up by the FCC for establishing a competitive local telephone market is a forward-looking pricing mechanism known as TELRIC. In effect, this means that local telcos must set access prices -- paid by competitors for access to the local telephone network -- on a forward-looking cost basis in an attempt to reflect a competitive market as best as possible, rather than according to backward-looking monopoly costs. This is a prudent, pro-competitive regulatory position to take, and it clearly reflects the wishes of those in Congress who voted in favor of the 1996 Act. ~~Backpedaling by the FCC from forward-looking pricing would spell the end of local competition for the foreseeable future for most consumers.~~

SBSC understands that establishing access prices is a messy business, but the FCC will have to partake in such endeavors until alternative delivery systems (i.e., new means to make telephone calls, whether over the air, or through other phone networks, cable TV, electricity utilities, etc.) compete with existing local telephone networks. ~~I urge the new FCC leadership not to throw in the towel on this critical issue after just being on the job for a couple of months.~~ You have a duty to make sure that local telephone competition becomes a reality.

Backtracking on forward-looking pricing will undo making local telephone competition a reality. Please feel free to contact me if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

  
Karen Kerrigan  
President

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Tel: (202) 785-0238 • Fax (202) 822-8118

www.sbsc.org